IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 15-23 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein.

Please amend Claims 1 and 24, and add new Claims 37 and 38 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

a first information extraction step of extracting first information from an image; ~~, including a registration signal used to correct the geometrical distortion of an image; and~~

a determination step of determining whether or not the first information extracted in said first information extraction step includes a registration signal used to correct the geometrical distortion of the image; and ~~to perform a process for extracting digital watermark information from said image based on whether or not a registration signal is extracted in said first information extraction step~~

a second information extraction step of extracting digital watermark information from the image, wherein said second information extraction step is performed only if said determination step determines that the first information extracted in said first information extraction step includes the registration signal.

2. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information and said second information are embedded in said image as invisible or less visible electronic watermarks.

3. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a division step of dividing said image into at least one block; and

a selection step of selecting said block.

4. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information indicates that said image includes a specific image.

5. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said second information is additional information.

6. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information and said second information are added to components of said image that are less easily discerned by a human's eyes.

7. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information is information used to identify a paper currency, securities, a copyrighted image or others.

8. (Original) A method according to Claim 4, wherein said specific image is a paper currency, and said second information indicates at least either an issuance country or the value of said paper currency.

9. (Original) A method according to Claim 4, further comprising:

a determination step of determining whether said specific image is included,

wherein, when said specific image is included, an image process is performed based on said image.

10. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said method is performed by a printer driver.

11. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the amount of said first information is smaller than the amount of said second information.

12. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the embedment depth of said first information relative to said image is greater than the embedment depth of said second information.

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the time required for the extraction of said first information is shorter than the time required for the extraction of said second information.

14. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the number of sets of said first information present in the unit area is greater than the number of sets of said second information.

15 - 23 (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

a first information extraction step of extracting, from an image, first information; ~~indicating that said image is a specific image; and~~

a determination step of determining whether or not the first information extracted in said first information extraction step indicates that the image is a specific image; and ~~to perform a process for extracting digital watermark information from said image based on whether or not a registration signal is extracted in said first information extraction step~~

a second information extraction step of extracting digital watermark information from the image, wherein said second information extraction step is performed only if said determination step determines that the first information indicates that the image is a specific image.

25. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said first information and said second information are embedded in said image as invisible or less visible electronic watermarks.

26. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, further comprising:

a division step of dividing said image into at least one block; and a selection step of selecting at least one block.

27. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein the amount of said first information is smaller than the amount of said second information.

28. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein the embedment depth of said first information relative to said image is greater than the embedment depth of said second information.

29. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein the time required for the extraction of said first information is shorter than the time required for the extraction of said second information.

30. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said specific image is an image of a paper currency or securities.

31. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said first information and said second information are added to components of said image that are less easily discerned by a human's eyes.

32. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said first information is information used to identify a paper currency or securities.

33. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said specific image is a paper currency, and said second information indicates at least either an issuance country or the value of said paper currency.

34. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, further comprising:

a determination step of determining whether said specific image is included,

wherein, when said specific image is included, an image process is performed based on said image.

35. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, which is performed by a printer driver.

36. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein the number of sets of said first information present in the unit area is greater than the number of sets of said second information.

37. (New) An image processing apparatus comprising:

first extraction means for extracting first information from an image;

determination means for determining whether or not the first information extracted by said first extraction means includes a registration signal used to correct the geometrical distortion of the image; and

second extraction means for extracting digital watermark information from the

image, wherein said second extraction means performs extraction only if said determination means determines that the first information extracted by said first extraction means includes the registration signal.

38. (New) An image processing method comprising:

a first information extraction step of extracting first information from an image;

a determination step of determining whether or not the first information extracted in said first information extraction step includes a registration signal used to correct the geometrical distortion of the image;

a correction step of correcting the geometrical distortion of the image based on the registration signal extracted in said first information extraction step, if said determination step determines that the first information includes a registration signal; and

a second information extraction step of extracting digital watermark information from the image corrected in said correction step, if said determination step determines that the first information includes a registration signal.